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633 736 those who were ill-treated, took in the lost or abandoned, settled many family matters involving children.

From the early part of 1937 the Council embarked on a somewhat more concrete plan of child protection. For the programme which developed, the wider term of child welfare cannot be used, for it did not concern itself with instruction to mothers in the care of children, or provision of monetary assistance to families with children, development of kindergarten schools, or nurseries, or playgrounds—any of the "welfare" features so well understood elsewhere. Because of the special problems of Shanghai, emphasis was placed first on the field of "protection."

633 736 597 567 357 THE ORIGIN OF THE Council's recent concern with child protection is traceable to requests of the Slavery Committee of the League of Nations that it give attention to the problem of *mui tsai* or *pei nu*, so-called girl slaves. Through past centuries and down to the present, the prevailing poverty of China caused poor families in certain areas of the country to give their daughters to richer families better able to support them. During childhood and adolescence they are employed in domestic service, and then are married to husbands who have been found for them by their employers. It is obvious that this system provides possibilities of exploitation. Separated from their own relatives and in the control of others, these *mui tsai* can be worked very hard, even mistreated. In the view of the League of Nations Committee, there were elements in the situation suggestive of slavery. On the other hand, many instances were known of girls being well cared for in the homes to which they went. The League Committee, examining as it did many customs in different parts of the world where lack of freedom and of control over their own destinies characterised the lives of various groups, had urged on the governments in control of the regions in question the adoption of measures to alleviate the lot of the groups concerned. In the Far East, the League's views regarding *mui tsai* had been impressed on the governments of China, Hongkong and Malaya.

Accordingly, early in 1937 the Shanghai Municipal Council placed some responsibility on the Industrial and Social Division. The Chief of the Division was named "Protector of *mui tsai*." The Division believed, however, that the task had been too narrowly

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conceived, and accordingly undertook as a first step the examination of the general question of the place of authorities in the protection of *mui tsai* and other groups of young persons "transferred into the control of others not near relatives and exploited by them."

A study was made during 1937 and 1938, delayed somewhat by the outbreak of Sino-Japanese hostilities in the latter half of 1937 and by the abnormal situation extending into 1938. A report was presented to the Council, and in November 1938 forwarded to the League of Nations for the use of its Slavery Committee. It was adopted by the Council on December 14, 1939. It recommended that a Child Protection Service be established in the Division. Some of the report's more relevant portions, chosen to show the range of the problem, follow:

"Case histories have been taken firstly of 176 girls who are *pei nu*[1] or in domestic conditions nearly allied to this: secondly of 72 girls who have been sold or mortgaged into a life of prostitution: thirdly of 27 girls bound by contract to a period of service in industrial undertakings where their earnings are the property of a contractor.

"Only a partial picture would have been presented if the study of *pei nu* only had been made, for unless the custom of transfer of girl children into the control of others than their immediate relatives and into domestic employment which is the essence of *pei nu* is seen in relation to other conditions which may have common features with this custom, there cannot be an intelligent recommendation as to administrative action regarding *pei nu*. In the question as to whether administrative action should be taken in respect of one group, the larger field must be seen.

"In all three types of transfer, whether for a longer or shorter period, money passes between the person transferring and the person to whom transferred. *Pei nu* as a rule being transferred at an early age, the amount of money passed in respect of them is small—from $20 to $30 in most cases. In respect of the girl mortgaged for a period of years into prostitution, the sum demanded is found in the studies to be higher than when a girl is disposed of outright to the brothel keeper, and in both cases more than for a *pei nu*. No girls interviewed were mortgaged into prostitution for less than $100 for a three-year period while there were several cases of girls disposed of for an indefinite period for less than this amount. Presumably some more enterprising entrepreneur, who knows how to create values, handled the girls who are mortgaged. The sum for which girls are bound into labour for two or three years is only from $30 to $45.

"It is immediately obvious that there is a wider custom of transfer into the control of others than is exemplified in the *pei nu* group. This

[1] [girl slaves -- Analyst]

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view was expressed in the 1937 Report on *pei nu* forwarded by the Council to the League of Nations Slavery Committee and was found by the Slavery Committee to coincide with a similar conception expressed to it from other sources.

"The Chinese Government delegate to the Sixth Committee of the League of Nations Assembly in 1937 (who is Chief of the Chinese Government delegation and its representative on the Advisory Committee on Social Questions) stated that the problem of *pei nu* can best be considered as part of the larger problem of child protection. The United Kingdom Government in its official communication to the Slavery Committee also indicated that work of the protection of women and children is intermingled with the problems arising out of the *mui tsai* or *pei nu* system. The Malayan Government has accepted in principle the minority report of the Commission on *mui tsai* in Hongkong and Malaya published in 1937. This recommended repeal of existing *mui tsai* legislation, the abolition of the legal status of *mui tsai* and the introduction of entirely new legislation for child protection."

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Even as the Shanghai study was being made and the report presented, it was obvious that the 1937 war had left stranded an army of young people whose parents had been killed, or who were separated from their families during head-long flight from danger. Some of these children were in refugee camps; others were on the streets, begging, stealing, those still surviving managing to live in some manner. By contrast, *mui tsai*, young girls in domestic employment had at least a roof over their heads, and presumably food to eat. While in no way condoning the system, Council officials believed that the first concern of a Child Protection Service should be the homeless. No special registration of *mui tsai* was recommended. The programme which was developed and details of which follow was designed to care for these children in so far as an administrative procedure may do so.

Child protection work was begun with the young people who came into the hands of the police and were in need of help. Before 1939 it was the custom for police to take to court for disposition all lost, abandoned, abducted, ill-treated and otherwise exploited children for disposition by the judge of the court. To deal constructively with the needs of these young people something more than a purely legal process appeared to be desirable. In theory the disposition of the person of any citizen, child or otherwise, should be by the legal process. But in the situation ruling in Shanghai, where the need was essentially a social one, it was felt

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that the form of court disposition could be replaced, to the advantage of the young people, by a social process. Accordingly, with the consent of the Secretary-General of the Council, police ceased to send cases of victimised children to the court, except in those instances where an adult was involved, when the court concurrently ruled as to the disposition of the child. All other cases were handed over to the Child Protection Service for the most careful handling possible under the circumstances.

The Chinese court held that the natural parents of a child in every case have a right to the child, whether exploited or otherwise. Instances occurred where a judge handed back to the care of parents girls who had been sold. The court view is based upon the relevant portion of the Civil Code. There is room for a reconsideration either of the law or of its interpretation by the court.

For the majority of those who either had no immediate relatives or were being exploited by relatives other than their parents, placement in an institution frequently represented the only possible adjustment. Every effort was made at once to find relatives or friends of a young person coming into the hands of the Service. If time was allowed to elapse, the chances of finding that link which would perhaps save the child from being alone and adrift forever might be lost. By newspapers, and by using local Chinese methods of advertising near the place where a child had strayed, the vital link was frequently established.

IN 1940, FOR THE FIRST TIME, a complete picture was obtained of the extent of lawbreaking by young people under 18 years of age. In all, 981 appeared in court on criminal charges—899 boys, 82 girls. Of this number 70 per cent were unemployed; 87 per cent were involved in some form of thieving. Twenty-one per cent had previous convictions.

There was no special procedure in the First Special District Court governing the treatment of juvenile offenders. Regulations for a special procedure of the Ministry of Judicial Administration of the Chinese Government exist, but were not in use in Shanghai, or elsewhere in China, so far as is known.[2] In response to the

[2] In Instruction No. 2237, dated May 9, 1936, the Ministry of Judicial Administration of the Chinese Government instructed the courts to temper justice with mercy and understanding in dealing with juvenile delinquents. The articles of instruction